

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

VOL. II No. 2

WINTER 1972

MUSEUM WORKSHOP

Agenda

*Sat., April 22, 1972 — College of St. Joseph the Provider
Clement Road, Rutland, Vermont*

GENERAL TOPIC:

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND ITS MUSEUM

10:00 a.m. Registration and Coffee

10:30 a.m. Opening Session — Mr. John F. von Daacke,
Supervising Planner, new
New York State Museum
Albany, New York

11:00 a.m. Small group sessions (determined at meeting)

1:00-2:00 p.m. Luncheon — (Roncalli Hall)

A luncheon shall be provided in the College Dining Hall
at \$2.50 per person. Reservations for the luncheon are required before
Wednesday April 19. Call 773-7525 for reservations.

2:00 p.m. Small group sessions (determined at meeting)

3:00 p.m. Closing session

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*Sun., April 23, 1972 — Seventh Day Adventist Church
101 Center Street, Rutland, Vermont.*

GENERAL TOPIC:

THE NEW RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

2:00 p.m. Mr. von Daacke will discuss specific recommendations for
the new museum and make closing remarks regarding the
workshop.

**ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE
NEW RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM
ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.**

A GIRL OF THE '80's"

Charlotte Conant

Teacher in Rutland

1887-8

Have you ever read "A Girl of the '80s"? This is the biography of Charlotte Conant which was the basis for my book review last September (1971). There is a delightful section devoted to her year of teaching in Rutland where she found in 1887-8 a cosmopolitan community where wealth and culture were obvious. She taught in Miss Clark's private school and lived in the home of Mrs. Page, widow of a recent Vermont governor. This same Mrs. Page was brought to Dana Hall as head of residence when Miss Cooke acquired this school in 1899. Miss Cooke was three years younger than Miss Conant and was born and raised in Rutland. Her maternal grandfather by the name of Bardwell owned the inn which served the stage coaches passing through. Miss Cooke had a fine mind and started her teaching career at an early age. I believe she never really earned a high school diploma. One of her pupils was Helen Wheeler, daughter of a very wealthy industrialist by the name of Marcellus Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler was greatly impressed by this young teacher and eventually put up the \$50,000 to buy Dana Hall for her. She accompanied Helen (Wheeler) when this young girl wanted to enter the college. Her father insisted that Miss Cook must live nearby in case of an emergency. Miss Cooke must have absorbed a great deal of knowledge from Rutland's cultural life. She had always a love and knowledge of literature, poetry, music, art as well as skill in practical matters.

To return to Charlotte Conant, she wrote to her family about the parties to which she was invited with the principal of the school, Miss Clark. She described the glittering dinner table, the evening receptions, the richly dressed ladies, musicians brought up from Boston, a Dante Club organized by ladies who had traveled in Europe and learned Italian; she frequently asked her mother to send her some accessories from the family treasures to be used with a new dress she had procured for one of these social functions.

Have you been aware of these interesting flashbacks into Rutland's past? I suppose the wealth came from the development of the railroads and the native products (marble) which could be sold outside. Mr. Wheeler evidently combined several money making activities.

Miss Conant was unable to return to Rutland for a second year because of her mother's failing health. She was needed at home and stayed with her father and younger sister after her mother's death. Eventually Judge Conant remarried (they lived in Greenfield, Mass.) so Charlotte was then free to join Florence Bigelow in buying the property in Natick for their school. Strange how the movements of Miss Conant and Miss Cooke crossed and recrossed.

This book fascinated me. I'm really "digging" Natick history, to use today's slang.

Excerpts from a letter February 21, 1922, lent to Miss Marjorie Smith by a friend, Mrs. Homer Rogers, written by Miss Dorothy Stanley, 12 Curve Street, Natick, Mass. 01760.

The Library Committee of the Shrewsbury Historical Society is anxious to locate, collect and preserve any and all materials relating to Shrewsbury's past.

Do you have any of the following historical materials which you would be willing to give or to loan to the society either now or at some future time? Letters, books, manuscripts, handbills, posters, postcards, account books and other business records, diaries, newspapers, Vermont magazines (Vermont Life and the Vermonter etc.), Shrewsbury Town Reports, photographs, slides, movies, and any other Shrewsbury or Vermont material.

FINALLY A DREAM NEARS FRUITION

from RUTLAND DAILY HERALD

Friday, October 7, 1870 (Vol. 10, No. 135) p. 3.

A NEED IN RUTLAND

Editor Rutland Herald:— During our recent and successful Centennial Celebration it has occurred to the writer, and doubtless to others, that we need in this town a good fire-proof building in which to deposit whatever relics and curiosities may seek such a place for security against loss, and there to remain open to public inspection as mementoes of the fruitful past. Historical and antiquarian rooms are becoming marked features of our best regulated towns and cities. The historical rooms at Hartford, Conn., teem with interesting relics, and are visited by many from far and near, and new contributions are constantly added.

While we may not hope to rival such a collection, the great gathering of curiosities and relics during our Centennial shows that we are not destitute of means to make a respectable show in this respect should more or less of the owners choose to place them in such a custody, and as years roll on they will accumulate and increase in interest, and many sons and daughters of Rutland County, scattered over the globe, will be glad when occasion offers to contribute to such a collection.

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W. C.

**SAVE THE EVENING OF MAY 24TH FOR A PROGRAM ON
"JAMES HOPE AND HIS PAINTINGS"**

On Wednesday, May 24th, Mr. David S. Brooke, Director of the Currier Gallery of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire, will present an address accompanied by slides on the topic "James Hope and His Paintings."

James Hope was born in Scotland in 1818 and originally came to Canada. In 1834 he came to Fair Haven. In 1840 he taught school in West Rutland, and in 1843 set up as a professional artist. For a while he taught painting and drawing at Castleton Seminary but went to Montreal, Canada, for a couple of years. He returned to teach at Castleton Seminary. In 1850 he resided in Rutland, according to the 1850 census records. In the 1850's he moved to Castleton and thence to Watkins Glen, New York, in 1872.

Although he began his career as a self-taught portraitist, Hope most enjoyed landscape painting. Many of his landscapes have Rutland area scenes as their subject.

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